

# Long Term Care NEWSLETTER

Indiana State Department of Health

**ISDH Long Term Care  
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## ISDH Staff Changes

After over fifteen years of dedicated public service with the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), Judi Navarro will be leaving her position as long term care survey supervisor. Judi is survey supervisor for the northwest area of the state. Her last day with the agency will be December 31. We appreciate Judi's many contributions to the ISDH. Judi's efforts over the years have resulted in an improved survey system for the State of Indiana. We thank Judi for her leadership and achievements in healthcare quality improvement and wish her well.

The new survey supervisor for area 1 is Stacey Newton. Stacey graduated from nursing school Cum Laude in December 2003. She worked as an oncology nurse at an acute care hospital for two years and was promoted to charge nurse for that unit. Stacey transferred to a resource position and gained a variety of experience working all units of the hospital – from pediatrics to the ICU. Stacey has been with ISDH since February 2007 and worked as a complaint surveyor for the Division of Long Term Care. Stacey was promoted to Public Health Nurse Surveyor Supervisor on November 17 of this year. Stacey says that she "looks forward to an exciting, challenging and rewarding career with ISDH for many years to come."

## CMS Five-Star Quality Rating System

On December 18, 2008, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the Five-Star Nursing Home Rating System as part of its continued efforts to improve the [Nursing Home Compare Web site](#). The Five-Star rating system will provide a quality of care rating for each nursing home of 1 to 5 stars. Each nursing home will have a separate star rating for performance on health survey, performance on quality measures, for the hours of care provided per resident by all staff performing nursing care

tasks, and a separate staffing rating for hours of care provided by registered nurses. There will also be a composite measure to give an overall rating of quality performance that takes into account health survey inspections, quality measures, and the overall nursing staffing information from the most recent health survey inspection. The star rating system will give a more user friendly way for consumers to compare nursing homes within a State.

- A 5-star rating means that a facility ranks "much above average."
- A 4-star rating means a facility ranks "above average."
- A 3-star rating means a facility ranks "about average."
- A 2-star rating means a facility ranks "below average."
- A 1-star rating means a facility ranks "much below average."

#### Links to Information on the CMS Five-Star Rating System

The [CMS Five-Star Quality Rating System](#).

The [CMS Press Release on the Five-Star Quality Rating System](#) issued on December 18, 2008.

To assist States, regions, providers, and consumers in answering their questions, CMS has provided a comprehensive set of [questions and answers](#) concerning the research, planning, methodology, and next steps to the Five-Star Rating System and the Nursing Home Compare Web site.

CMS has published an updated version of its *Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home* which can help families through the process. The *Guide* can be also be accessed at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

The five star ratings on *Nursing Home Compare* are the most recent information to be added to the consumer information available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). Users can find up-to-date information about hospitals at *Hospital Compare* ([www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)) and dialysis clinics at *Dialysis Facility Compare* ([www.medicare.gov/Dialysis](http://www.medicare.gov/Dialysis)), as well as information about Medicare health and prescription drug plans ([www.medicare.gov/mppf](http://www.medicare.gov/mppf) and [www.medicare.gov/mpdpf](http://www.medicare.gov/mpdpf)).

#### Entering of Data for the Five-Star System

Data is entered into the CMS ASPEN data system as surveys and data forms are completed.

- CMS will pull data for Nursing Home Compare on the first business day of every month. This will take place beginning in January.
- CMS will post this pulled data on Nursing Home Compare on the third Thursday of every month.

Any data that is uploaded before the first business day of the month should appear later in that month on the website.

#### Indiana Rankings

The CMS Five-Star Nursing Home Quality Rating System is just one of many tools for the consumer to use to evaluate nursing homes in their vicinity. The Five-Star System is not the ultimate decision maker for residents and families in determining a choice for a long term care facility.

The CMS Five-Star Nursing Home Quality Rating System and the Indiana State Department of Health's report cards are different. The ISDH Long Term Care Consumer Report Cards is based on specific deficiencies throughout a three-year history of the facility. The CMS Five-Star Nursing Home Quality Rating System has these findings as well as staffing and specific quality measures.

Of the 505 Indiana nursing homes that were a part of the CMS Five-Star Nursing Home Quality Rating

System, 50 facilities (9.9%) garnered the highest mark--Five Stars while 142 facilities scored the lowest, One Star. The following is the distribution of overall facility ratings for Indiana nursing homes:

5 Stars "much above average": 50 (9.9%)  
4 Stars "above average": 100 (19.8%)  
3 Stars "about average": 108 (21.4%)  
2 Stars "below average": 105 (20.8%)  
1 Star "much below average": 142 (28.1%)

## Emergency Updates

2008 has proven to be a year of weather related challenges for Indiana health care facilities. The latest challenges were in the form of freezing rain occurring on December 18-19 followed by frigid temperatures and wind chills. At least twenty-nine nursing homes lost power resulting from the winter storm. One nursing home had to evacuate residents after a back-up generator caught fire resulting in smoke filling the facility. Another facility evacuated a small portion of its residents as a precautionary measure. As of Tuesday morning, December 23, all residents had returned to their facility and only one facility was still on back-up power.

The September 2008 Leadership Conference focused on emergency preparedness. Health care facilities were encouraged to plan for emergencies such as ice storms and power outages. With the onset of severe winter weather, facilities should be preparing and practicing for winter emergencies.

- Make sure the facility emergency plan includes a plan for power outages
- Check supplies to ensure adequate supplies for winter emergencies
- Test and maintain the back-up generator to ensure that it is in proper working order
- Ensure that staff are trained and prepared for winter emergencies to include power outages, prevention of elopements, and staffing during emergencies

Even with this new round of weather emergencies, some health care facilities are still recovering from the last disaster. One piece of good news to report. Munster Surgical Hospital flooded on September 15 and experienced infrastructure damage to electrical and plumbing systems among other things. The facility reopened on December 12 and is fully operational.

This is the last ISDH Long Term Care Newsletter for 2008. On behalf of all of us at the Indiana State Department of Health, I wish you a Happy New Year! Best wishes for a safe and healthy new year.

Terry Whitson  
Assistant Commissioner  
Indiana State Department of Health

